

IN THE CLAIMS

In response to the Examiner's Amendment in the Notice of Allowance dated 12/31/2009, please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing and maintaining socket control information for high speed network connections, the method comprising the steps of:  
storing socket control information in a control block (CB) cache in a transport offload engine (TOE);  
wherein CB entries in the CB cache are comprised of socket control information for sockets assigned to the TOE by a host computer;  
wherein the CB cache is a multi-port device providing direct access to the CB cache via each port;  
wherein a first port is dedicated to transmit logic within the TOE;  
wherein a second port is dedicated to receive logic within the TOE; and  
wherein at least one of the ~~[[said ]]~~first port and~~[[/or]]~~the second port ~~is~~ports are dedicated to time critical TOE clients.
2. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
dedicating a port to an optional memory;  
wherein the optional memory stores the CB entries that are directly accessible by the CB cache via the port; and  
wherein the optional memory also serves as main memory for the TOE.
3. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 2, wherein one entry in the CB cache is kept empty to facilitate reading a CB entry from the optional memory before writing the CB entry into the optional memory.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
  - dedicating a port for host transfers of the CB entries.
5. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the CB entries are read from the CB cache in a word order that is dependent upon a port's purpose.
6. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
  - dedicating a port to low demand TOE clients; and
  - wherein the low demand TOE clients are granted access to the port based on a priority.
7. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of:
  - providing field locking means for locking a specific field within a CB entry that is being accessed by a port;
  - wherein the locking means prevents other ports from accessing a locked field.
8. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
  - providing a hash reference table;
  - wherein the hash reference table is comprised of hash values corresponding to each CB entry in the CB cache;
  - creating a hash value for a received network packet;
  - comparing the received network packet hash value with the hash values in the hash reference table; and
  - searching for a corresponding CB entry in the CB cache via a port if the network packet hash value matches the hash value in the hash reference table.
9. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
  - providing a CB identifier reference table;

wherein the CB identifier reference table is comprised of a unique CB identifier corresponding to each CB entry in the CB cache and an associated CB cache index;

creating a CB identifier by parsing out the CB identifier from a CB access address;

comparing the CB identifier with CB identifier values in the CB identifier reference table;

accessing the CB cache via a port using the CB cache index of a matching CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table; and

wherein if the CB identifier does not match the CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table, then a corresponding socket has either not been assigned to the TOE or the CB entry must be brought into the CB cache from an optional memory.

10. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in Claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

providing a CB identifier reference table;

wherein the CB identifier reference table is comprised of a unique CB identifier corresponding to a CB entry for each socket assigned to the TOE and an associated CB cache index;

creating a CB identifier for a CB access by parsing out the CB identifier from a CB access address;

comparing the CB identifier with CB identifier values in the CB identifier reference table;

accessing the CB cache via the port using the CB cache index of a matching CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table;

wherein if the CB identifier does not match the CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table, then the CB entry is not in the CB cache; and

providing means for retrieving a corresponding CB entry from the optional memory and placing the retrieved CB entry in the CB cache, if the CB cache index of the matching CB identifier value indicates that the CB entry is not in the CB cache.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for accessing and maintaining socket control information for high speed network connections, comprising:

a mechanism for storing socket control information in a control block (CB) cache in a transport offload engine (TOE);

wherein CB entries in the CB cache are comprised of socket control information for sockets assigned to the TOE by a host computer;

wherein the CB cache is a multi-port device providing direct access to the CB cache via each port;

wherein a first port is dedicated to transmit logic within the TOE;

wherein a second port is dedicated to receive logic within the TOE; and

a mechanism for dedicating at least one of the [[said ]]first port and/or the second port[[s]] to time critical TOE clients.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

a mechanism for dedicating a port to an optional memory;

wherein the optional memory stores the CB entries that are directly accessible by the CB cache via the port; and

wherein the optional memory also serves as main memory for the TOE.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 12, wherein one entry in the CB cache is kept empty to facilitate reading a CB entry from the optional memory before writing the CB entry into the optional memory.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

a mechanism for dedicating a port for host transfers of the CB entries.

15. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, wherein the CB entries are read from the CB cache in a word order that is dependent upon a port's purpose.

16. (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:

a mechanism for dedicating a port to low demand TOE clients; and  
wherein the low demand TOE clients are granted access to the port based on a priority.

17. (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:  
field locking means for locking a specific field within a CB entry that is being accessed by a port;  
wherein the locking means prevents other ports from accessing a locked field.
18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:  
a hash reference table;  
wherein the hash reference table is comprised of hash values corresponding to each CB entry in the CB cache;  
a mechanism for creating a hash value for a received network packet;  
a mechanism for comparing the received network packet hash value with the hash values in the hash reference table; and  
a mechanism for searching for a corresponding CB entry in the CB cache via a port if the network packet hash value matches the hash value in the hash reference table.
19. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 11, further comprising:  
a CB identifier reference table;  
wherein the CB identifier reference table is comprised of a unique CB identifier corresponding to each CB entry in the CB cache and an associated CB cache index;  
a mechanism for creating a CB identifier by parsing out the CB identifier from a CB access address;  
a mechanism for comparing the CB identifier with CB identifier values in the CB identifier reference table;  
a mechanism for accessing the CB cache via a port using the CB cache index of a matching CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table; and

wherein if the CB identifier does not match the CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table, then a corresponding socket has either not been assigned to the TOE or the CB entry must be brought into the CB cache from an optional memory.

20. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 12, further comprising:  
a CB identifier reference table;

wherein the CB identifier reference table is comprised of a unique CB identifier corresponding to a CB entry for each socket assigned to the TOE and an associated CB cache index;

a mechanism for creating a CB identifier for a CB access by parsing out the CB identifier from a CB access address;

a mechanism for comparing the CB identifier with CB identifier values in the CB identifier reference table;

a mechanism for accessing the CB cache via the port using the CB cache index of a matching CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table;

wherein if the CB identifier does not match the CB identifier value in the CB identifier reference table, then the CB entry is not in the CB cache; and

means for retrieving a corresponding CB entry from the optional memory and placing the retrieved CB entry in the CB cache, if the CB cache index of the matching CB identifier value indicates that the CB entry is not in the CB cache.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for accessing and maintaining socket control information for high speed network connections, comprising:

a multi-port SRAM control block (CB) cache in a transport offload engine (TOE);  
wherein CB entries in the CB cache are comprised of socket configuration information for sockets assigned to the TOE by a host computer;

wherein the CB cache provides TOE clients direct access to the CB cache via each port;

wherein a first port is dedicated to transmit logic within the TOE;

wherein a second port is dedicated to receive logic within the TOE; and

a mechanism for dedicating at least one of the [[said ]]first port and~~[[/or]]~~ the second port~~[[s]]~~ to time critical TOE clients.

22. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, further comprising:  
a mechanism for arbitrating access between TOE clients sharing a common port  
in a multi-port device based on a priority; and  
wherein time critical TOE clients are assigned a higher priority.
23. (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, further comprising:  
a mechanism for dedicating a port to low demand TOE clients; and  
wherein the low demand TOE clients are granted access to the port based on a  
priority.